

Navigation Committee

11 April 2024

Agenda item number 13

The work of the Rangers

Report by Lucy Burchnall

Purpose

To set out the main duties undertaken by the Ranger team.

Broads Plan context

The report sets out the areas of the Broads Plan the Ranger role contributes towards.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Rangers are a visible presence on the Broads, promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public and

ensuring safe enjoyment and protection of the environment. Rangers also maintain sites for recreation and conservation benefit.

2. Ranger Duties

- 2.1. Ranger duties are formed from statutory requirements, including those required to ensure the management of risks set out in the Authority's Safety Management System (SMS) and the Broads Acts. Further duties are set in line with the Authority's corporate priorities supporting the business and other strategic plans. The role by necessity also needs to be able to react to new challenges as required which has recently included responding to the bird flu outbreak, assisting blue light services with missing persons, and identifying and helping remove invasive species.

3. Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) and the Ranger role

- 3.1. Members will be aware, the PMSC is an agreed national standard for port marine safety which formalises the duties and responsibilities for safety and environmental protection within UK ports and harbours. The Code is applicable to all harbour authorities and is mandatory.
- 3.2. The Code requires that all harbour authorities base their powers, policies, plans and procedures on a Formal Safety Assessment (FSA), and that they maintain a 'Safety Management System' to control the risks that are identified to a level which is as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP).
- 3.3. This Safety Management System (SMS) document details the arrangements put in place by the Broads Authority to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of those working on, visiting or using the Broads.
- 3.4. One of the main control measures for many of the policies set out in the SMS document, such as the bridges, channel marker and hydrography policies, is performed by the Rangers carrying out the relevant checks against the standards as set out in the policies as part of their duties. This includes checking gauge boards, reporting channel marker issues to Trinity House and investigating all instances of reported groundings.
- 3.5. Other policies and risk areas are managed directly by the Rangers, including the towing (recreational vessels) policy, enforcing the Byelaws and using special directions to ensure the free and safe passage of all vessels and removal of any navigational obstructions.

4. Navigation Officer duties

- 4.1. Rangers act as nominated deputies for the Navigation Officer as defined in the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 and can give navigational directions to vessels as appropriate. This consists of the ability to give directions to specific vessels in relation to navigation, mooring, loading/unloading, etc.

4.2. Rangers routinely enforce the Byelaws made under the Act and carry out all investigation and preparation work for taking cases to court where this action is appropriate. In 2023-24 a total of 215 Memorandums of Navigational Warning (MoNW) were issued for offences and over 90 complaints or incidents investigated further, with successful prosecutions for overstaying and a further pending case for a vessel being let go.

5. Patrolling

5.1. Patrolling makes up the main part of the Ranger role, with of 45% of the Rangers’ time spent on this (see Appendix 1). Patrolling allows the Authority to have a visible presence out on the Broads. This presence on its own promotes safe behaviour however there are many tasks which are a routine part of patrolling which are all fundamental to the safe management of enjoyment of the area.

5.2. Some of these tasks are set out in the following diagram.



6. Delivering Best Value

6.1. In 2003 DEFRA produced a guidance document outlining best value and performance improvements for national parks and the Broads Authority. The guidance was intended to help secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services, by focusing on best value and performance improvement and ultimately improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, visits, or works in the National Parks.

6.2. For the Broads, this included a review of patrolling areas and how frequently the patrol launches visit each stretch of water. These targets are kept under review in line with changing needs (taken from incident numbers and emerging issues, such as increased plant growth) but the main purpose of these targets, to ensure there is an adequate

visible presence of a Ranger on the Broads, remains unchanged and these are still referred to as our best value targets. The targets are set out in Appendix 2.

7. Assisting with Emergencies

- 7.1. The Authority is not an emergency first responder, but we do have a duty to respond to any hazards in the navigation and to any reported oil spills. We work closely with the Coastguard and other emergency services to give local advice that could help in an emergency and provide support as required, such as with vessels or vehicles. We are also able to provide information on boat ownership so in the case of any hire boats the yards can be quickly informed of any ongoing incidents.
- 7.2. Following an incident, the local Ranger will also carry out any necessary investigations into what caused the incident and provide follow up care/information to the people affected, such as securing vessels and liaising with owner or boatyards over recovery of the vessel. All reported incidents are recorded and reported to the Boat Safety Management Committee.

8. Corporate Priorities

- 8.1. As well as the statutory and general duties set out above, Ranger are also given specific areas of focus each year, in line with the corporate priorities for the Authority. For the coming year, these objectives are set out below.
- 8.2. Ranger corporate objectives 2024
 1. Help promote safe use of the Broads area:
 - Seven-day cover on launches plus late patrols to encourage good use of the Broads.
 - Reduce speeding by carrying out regular radar checks including targeted high-profile checks in key locations.
 - Arrange Super Safety Day events on high use sites including those with access to the water for canoeing and other paddle sports. Arrange support from partner organisations.
 - Survey visitors on hired boats including paddle sports regarding handover procedure.
 - Promote lifejacket use, including distributing stickers for children seen wearing lifejackets as part of Broadcaster quiz page.
 2. Support other functions of the Authority to ensure compliance against key areas of work:
 - NOC's to be issued to all canoes and paddleboards without a toll (or British Canoe membership). Ensure ID is seen, or further details verified.
 - Hazardous boat checks to be carried out on all vessel where Ranger suspects an issue with safety, such as issues with fuel storage seen onboard.

- Identify and report new works along the river which may require a Works License and/or planning permission.
 - Check for compliance against new paddle sport licencing scheme including display of registration marks.
3. Develop opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the area:
- Deliver Broads Authority events and education visits.
 - Regular check on countryside sites within the area. Identify improvement projects such as updating signage, habitat improvement or recreational benefits.

9. Maintaining the Broads area

- 9.1. The Ranger Team also works closely with the Ecology Officers and the Waterways and Recreation Officer to plan and carry out improvement works to both recreation and countryside sites. This work mainly takes place out of the main visitor season (November to March) and is based on the site management plans for each site as well as feedback from the Rangers over any extra repairs or improvements needed from the site checks undertaken.
- 9.2. The Ranger Team is also involved in bank side tree work which is planned centrally by the Ecology team and set out on the tree management plan. For the last winter period the Ranger Team has been working alongside the deployment of the tree shears. Rangers are also responsible for removing trees causing a direct hazard to navigation, including any trees which have fallen into the river.

10. Partnership working and other duties

- 10.1. There is a lot of cross over with the Ranger role and other groups and organisations working on the Broads. Rangers regularly work with landowners, boatyards, parish and local councils and emergency services, as well as carrying out joint patrols with Broads Beat, the Environment Agency, and the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.
- 10.2. In the last month, the Ranger team have taken Environment Agency staff out to inspect the gabion baskets on the Haddiscoe Cut and Cadent Gas to inspect gas crossing signs. The team met with a parish council to discuss a canoe platform, attended a meeting with the Norfolk Water Safety Forum to discuss the safety events planned for the coming year and delivered fast flowing water training to 40 boatyards show out staff.
- 10.3. Other duties vary throughout the season and day to day and include responding to email enquiries, delivering broadcaster, managing, training, and overseeing volunteers, assisting injured wildlife, helping find lost pets, boats, or other items as well as anything else as required.

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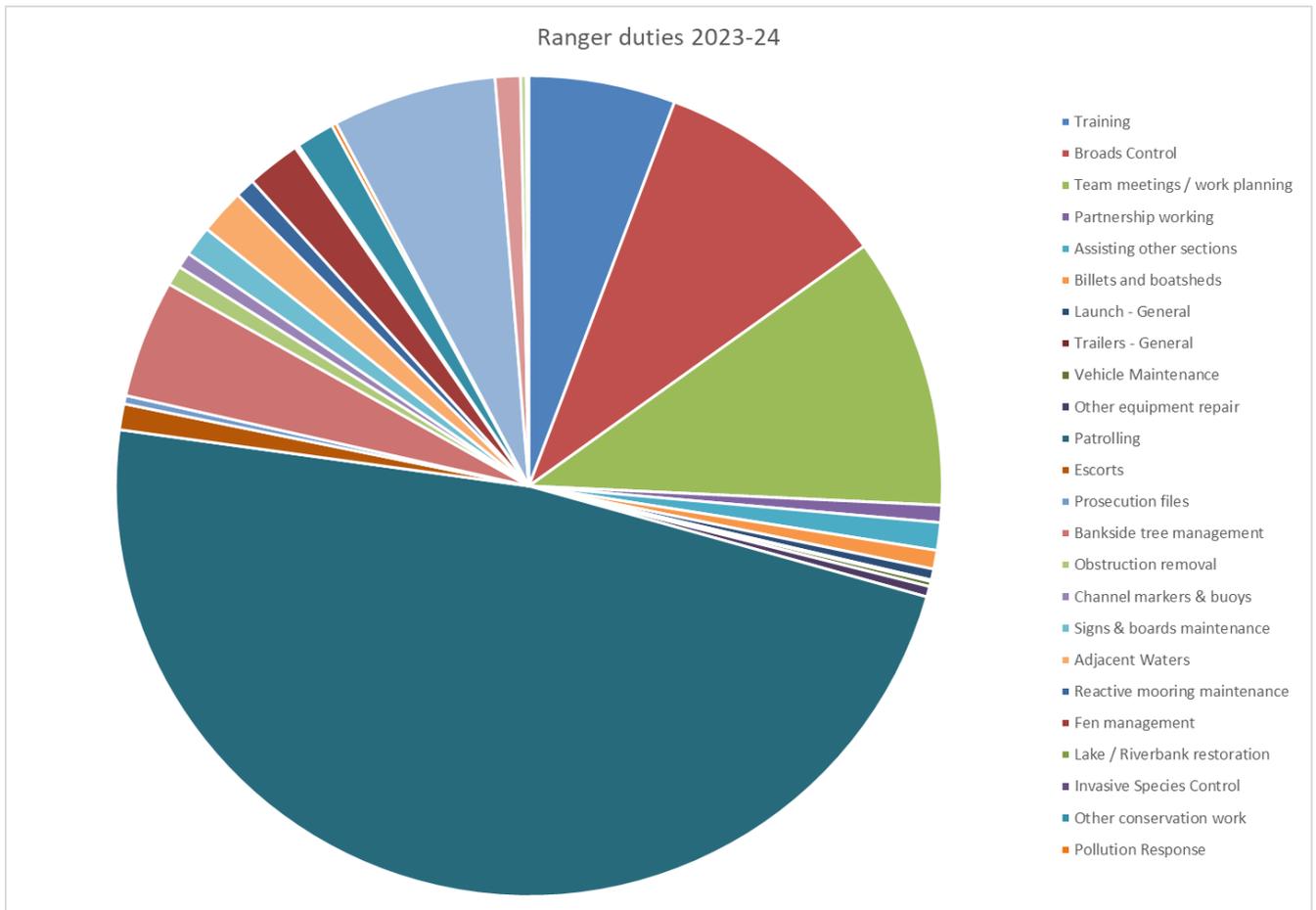
[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C4

Appendix 1 – Ranger role as a percentage of time spent on each duty 2023-24

Appendix 2 – Best Value Patrol targets

Appendix 1 - Ranger role as a percentage of time spent on each duty 2023-24

Rangers report the time they spend on each work area to Broads Control throughout the day. This is recorded and reported to each Navigation Committee meeting. The chart below shows the time spent on each area of work for the 2023-34 season (up to 20 March 2024).



Appendix 2 - Best Value Patrol targets

Location	Visits per month		
	April/May/June/September/October	July/August	November/December/January/February/March
Horstead	4	4	1
Belaugh	4	4	1
Caen Meadow	8	8	1
Wroxham	16	20	4
Salhouse	12	16	2
Horning Swan	12	16	2
Horning Ferry	12	16	2
Horning Waterworks	8	12	2
Ranworth Dam	4	4	1
Ant Mouth	12	12	2
Ranworth	4	8	1
Stalham	4	4	2
Wayford Bridge	4	4	1
Dilham	4	4	1
Sutton	8	8	2
Barton Turf	8	8	2
Barton Broad	12	12	3
Neatishead	4	4	2
Irstead Staithe	12	12	2
How Hill	12	12	2
Ludham Bridge	12	12	2
Hickling	4	8	2
Heigham Sound	8	8	2
Waxham Cut	1	1	1
Horsey	4	8	1
West Somerton	4	4	1
Martham Ferry	8	8	1
Potter Heigham Bridge	16	16	2
Womack Water	16	16	2
Thurne Dyke	8	8	1
Thurne Mouth	12	16	2
St Benets	12	12	2
South Walsham	4	4	1
Upton	4	4	1
Acle	4	8	2
Stokesby	4	8	1
Stracey Windpump	4	4	1
Mautby Marsh Farm	4	4	1
New Mills	4	4	1
Norwich Yacht Station	4	4	2
Thorpe Green	4	4	1
Bramerton	12	12	2
Brundall	12	12	2
Rockland	8	8	2
Beauchamp Arms	8	8	2
Cantley	4	8	2
Reedham	4	4	2
Loddon	8	8	1
Reedham Marina	8	8	2
7 Mile House (Yare)	12	12	2
Berney Arms	28	28	2
Breydon Water	28	28	2
Breydon Bridge	28	28	1
Yarmouth Marina	20	20	1
3 Mile House (Bure)	8	8	2
St Olaves	12	12	3
Waveney Forest	12	12	3
Burgh Castle	28	28	2
Geldeston	4	4	1
Beccles	8	8	2
Aldeby	8	12	2
Worlingham	8	12	2
Burgh St Peter	16	16	4
Oulton Broad	12	12	3
Somerleyton	12	12	2
Herringfleet	8	8	2